



June 1994

Carolina DX Association

The Pileup

Newsletter of the CDXA

WD4R	Joe Simpkins	President
K2SD	Scott Douglass	Vice-President
W4UNP	Bill Jennings	Secretary-Treasurer
WZ3Q	Don Daso	Editor
AG4L	Bruce Gragg	Net Manager

The President's Column

Welcome to our June issue.

A record crowd (I think we had 18 there) attended one of our Wednesday luncheons recently, when Alex, RA4HT visited with us. Alex is in the US as part of a group of Russian engineers on an exchange program. Alex and Oleg, UA4HMN plan to lunch with us again soon.

A unique program is coming up featuring our own KØSD, WA4UNZ and KI4TZ. All three have agreed to take part in a demonstration of "Oscilloscopes in Ham Radio" which will be part of our July 12th meeting. Bring your checkbook--there will be some hardware for sale.

Summertime beckons us toward tower work. Safety is paramount. Have a friend there to watch you climb, and able to summon help should that be necessary. Wear your climbing belt and make sure each click you hear is a solid connection to or around the tower. (*NEVER rely on just the sound--ALWAYS LOOK to make certain you're strapped or buckled on correctly.* --Ed.) Take a can of wasp spray with you. Don't over-extend yourself. Don't try to get all the work done all at once. Watch the sky. Cumulus clouds mean lightning potential, which means you shouldn't be working on that tower. Remember--it's just a hobby. Nothing on your tower is so important it cannot wait for safe conditions!

So ends my soapbox. See you at our up-coming meeting, and at the Wednesday luncheons.

73 de Joe WD4R

Antennas

Is this thing working or not?

Antennas are always a popular topic among any group of hams. Just walk through the hospitality suites late at night during Dayton--you'll overhear some of the best and brightest talking about the imponderables. You'll overhear talk of antennas, what works, what should work, what won't work, and why. Often, these conversations are filled with references to contests won or lost, to some other ham's success, to computer modeling (which is becoming more and more prevalent), and to some occasional mumbo-jumbo no one can explain.

Is this thing working or not? is pretty hard to answer--even for the most technically oriented among us. Ambitious types often get on and try to determine if their antenna is working (at least to their own personal satisfaction) by asking those they're talking with to give them accurate signal reports. This means comparisons. "This is antenna number one...number one...this is antenna number two...number two..." And while such tests are interesting (it's pretty neat just having two antennas to test, after all), they are, alas, mostly worthless. Such tests are accurate for that specific day and time, under those particular conditions, using that particular path, etc. Not the sort of data a contester or DXer can really use. In short, ego-building maybe, but not really useful information.

Assuming you're not convinced this opinion is accurate, what can you do to make any data you collect more useful? Collect more, I believe. For instance, while logging the results (such tests are useless if you don't keep records), also include the WWV numbers (flux and A/K numbers), as well as your estimation of the antenna's supposed gain, the time of day, the propagation on the band at the time of your test (keeping the time of year in mind, etc.) and recording other variables. For instance, are these two antennas fed with similar feedlines? Or is one using hardline and one RG-58 or something worse? You get the idea--always compare oranges to oranges.

Finally, make certain you're allowing enough time for such tests. One or two weeknights are not enough. You need to include as many of the above-listed variables as possible for a proper evaluation. On the low bands, this means an extended period of time. For instance, 80M antennas won't be evaluated properly if you don't include plenty of propagation variables. Night to night, morning to morning, season to season variables preclude figuring out what works during one evening's test, to say nothing of one DX contest. I'd say a full year of activity is needed to make a proper test. Think about that the next time you tune across one of these "number one...number one..." comparison tests.

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention one of the seminal articles on this subject, which appeared way back in 1966. In those pre-computer times, Paul Rockwell, W3AFM's "Station Design for DX" *QST* series covered many of these topics in detail. W3AFM gained a lot of his knowledge the hard way--empirically, through trial and error. Perhaps the most significant aspect of his article remains the idea a 2-db improvement in signal strength "...represented another workable layer of DX..." Heady stuff indeed, considering when he published this series. But I believe he was right, having worked into that layer of DX using 80M gain antennas at some larger contest stations. If you don't remember, or haven't read this series, I suggest you do.

This reference reminds me we should all keep our libraries and bookshelves up-to-date. A wealth of information and data have been published on antennas, and it's growing all the time. Rich Rosen's bibliography (once available in book form, but I think now only available on disk) indexed all the popular ham radio magazines, and remains an excellent resource. If you don't have room for anything else, keep your December issues of *QST* for the yearly index. Every hamfest brings you the chance to examine the latest offering from publishers. One of those books or articles describes just "the antenna you need." Or at least one you'll want to try. Or at least some tip to remember as you go out this summer to work on your antenna farm. Something to keep in mind as you read through this *Pileup*. Something to keep in mind as you try to determine if *your* antenna's working.

--WZ3Q

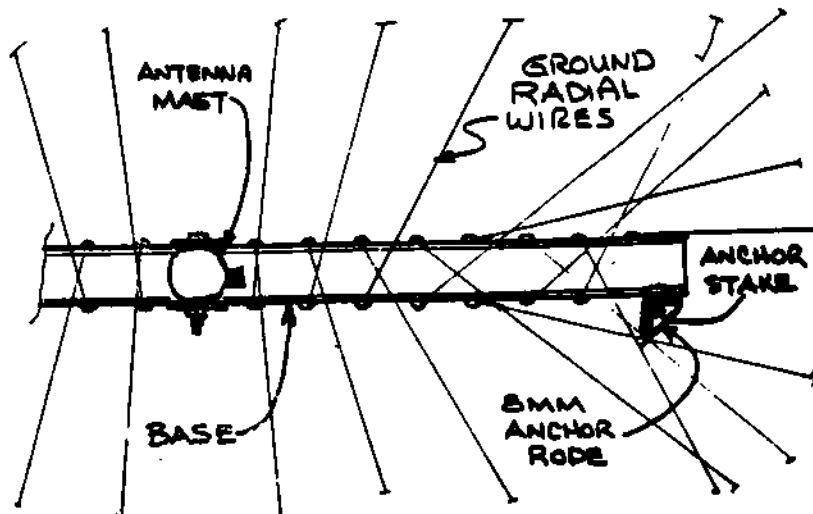
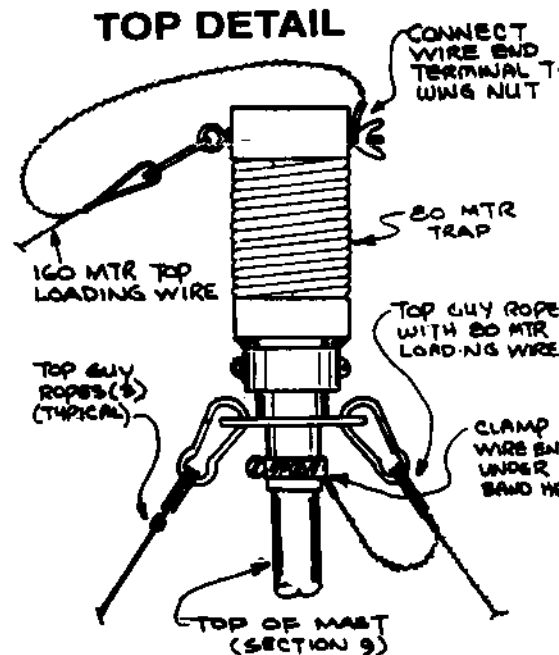
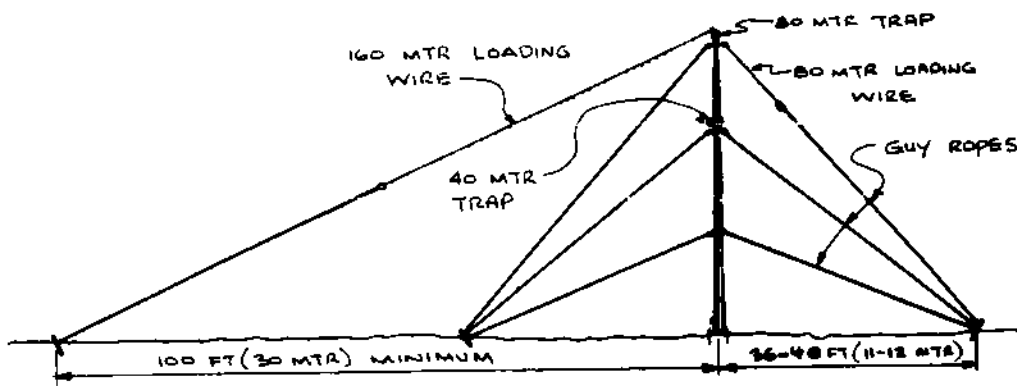
The Battle Creek Special

By now, as DXers, we've probably all heard something about this antenna. Some folks think it's been written up in *QST* or other ham magazine. Some folks think it's the same thing as the "Minooka Special" which Barry Boothe, W9UCW popularized in the mid-70s (cf. *QST*, December, 1974). Some folks think it's a commercial antenna. These opinions are incorrect.

The antenna remains something of a mystery--having been created by a group of low band enthusiasts from the Battle Creek, Michigan area solely for loan to DXpeditions. The name comes from the W9UCW design, as a quick comparison will show you. The antenna has indeed been loaned to expeditions, including: 8Q7AJ, ZSØZ, 7P8EN, AH1A, 4J1FS, 3Y5X, etc. I think you'll agree, their low band performances were solid.

Basically, the design operates as a quarter wave vertical on 40M and a quarter wave inverted-L on 80M and 160M. Obviously, this complements the typical triband beam very well, which was part of the design criteria, to allow better low band success for DXpeditions. Mechanically, the vertical portion is a trapped aluminum mast 48 feet tall, top loaded for 80 and 160. Two people can assemble and erect the antenna, usually in less than two hours. The antenna comes provided with a tilt-up base, guys and guy stakes, radials and top loading wires inside a reinforced shipping crate weighing 66 lbs. DXpeditions need only supply RF--the more rare the better.

So far, four such units have been constructed. Each version includes some small improvements in construction. Qualified DXpeditions, looking for a proven performer on the low bands, could benefit from contacting the "Battle Creek Special" builders--WØCD, W8UVZ, and K8GG. (Thanks to Charles Dewey, WØCD for answering my query.)



MEMBER PROFILE

Bill Tippet WØZV

Way back in 1963, as a 14-year old Novice in Ohio, I sat around reading and re-reading the story from November 1958 *QST* about KN4RID, from Greensboro, NC. Seems young Bill Tippet had achieved the first ever Novice DXCC. There was even a picture of Bill and his station. Just the sort of thing to drool over and wonder about and try to imagine what it must mean and have required to accomplish. 1963 was five long years later and no one else had done it--gotten DXCC. I certainly wasn't doing it; I was thrilled to have worked as far west as California on 3702 in the middle of the night with my AT-1 and long wire. Working 100 countries (plus getting the cards--from overseas!) seemed practically impossible to me.

Well...here we are, 36 years later, and that same KN4RID is now WØZV, and one of the newest members of the CDXA. Bill lives in the Raleigh area; he's the COO of Exide Electronics. Bill spent several years with Hewlett-Packard in Colorado, but felt the time was right to move back to NC, since he still has family here.

Bill tried 160 during a contest in 1984 and it quickly became his favorite band (80 and 10 are others). He's been an active contester, winning some single band plaques in the CQWW, ARRL DX Tests, CQ 160 and so forth. He had been making further DX history with one of the premiere low band stations in the US at his Colorado location. This new NC QTH provides 25 acres for, as Bill says, "Horses for my XYL and daughter, and antennas for me." Using a simple inverted-L, Bill worked 120 countries this season, including 16 new ones. His total is 254 on 160--further proof knowing the band, propagation, having the right Beverage receiving set-up and so on, helps. Results like these make you wonder what will happen when Bill gets up the 148 feet of Rohn 45 he brought along from Colorado. The guy anchors and base are poured; he's not sure if he'll put up the KLM 3-el 40M, 5-el 20M and KT-34XA he had in Colorado or not. Bill uses the venerable TS-930 and Alpha 76PA.

A hearty CDXA welcome to Bill. He's the type of experienced DXer and contest op we can use in our club. I'm sure he'll provide some low band expertise for us in the coming years.

If you can, dig out that 1958 copy of QST and check out the picture. A Ranger and 75A-4 and a 15M beam. Even a Gonset Communicator for 2M! Wow! We hope to see you at some of the Charlotte-based functions later this summer, Bill

CDXA PACKETCLUSTER NEWS

No news available at press time...if we had any, you'd be reading it here--in this space.

The Back Page

Meeting Notice

WHO? CDXA members
WHAT? MEETING
WHEN? 12 July 1994 Tuesday evening 7:00 PM
WHERE? The Fish Fare 11032 Independence Blvd. Charlotte, NC
WHY? Camaraderie, dinner & presentation/demonstration on
"Oscilloscopes in Ham Radio" by KØSD, WA4UNZ, & KI4TZ

We'll have a private room, so just go to the salad bar for your salad, return to our room and place your order off the menu. The restaurant is located on Independence Blvd. toward Matthews. After passing a partly-completed overpass, you will be within a half mile of the restaurant. From south of Charlotte, get on Highway 51 and merge with Independence, which will bring you right to the restaurant.

For those of you needing to leave it for the sitter, the telephone number at the restaurant is 847-2285.

Talk in on 147.18 as usual

Further adventures from reading the 1994 Amateur Radio Almanac

Contrary to popular rumor, Jimmy Stewart (the Hollywood actor) is not a ham. Stewart Granger, whose real name was James Stewart, was a ham--holding N6KGB until he became a Silent Key in 1993. Jose Feliciano is a ham--WP4CO, but he's not the famous musician. Yes, Donny Osmond was once licensed--holding KA7EVD, but that ticket has expired. Three kings are hams (all good DXers will know their countries)--EAØJC, HS1A, and JY1. The President of Italy is IØFCG; the President of Argentina is LU1SM. Some entertainment folks holding licenses: Marlon Brando, FO5GJ; Patty Loveless, KD4WUJ; Priscilla Presley, N6YOS; Chet Atkins, WA4CZD; Ronnie Milsap, WB4KCG; Joe Walsh, WB6ACU; Walter Cronkite, KB2GSD. Here's two probable surprise authors: David Ruben, TI2DR (*Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Sex...*) and Alexander Comfort, KA6UXR (*The Joy of Sex*).

Moving right along...just how fast can one talk on the radio? Or how many CW or phone contacts are possible per minute? Always looking for the proverbial yardstick of judgment, here are some rates to make you wonder--or your mouth to water...whatever your pleasure.

CW/hour

234 WN4KKN at HC8N CQWW 1992 2100 UTC Saturday on 15M
231 KC1F at NP4A CQWW 1982
230 WB9JKI at V31A CQWW 1987
223 LU8DQ at ZP5Y CQWW 1990 1800 UTC on 10M
215 W2GD at P4ØGD CQWW 1987

PHONE/hour

457 KRØY at P4ØL CQWW 1993 during the first hour on 20M
385 K5ZD at NP4A CQWW 1980
371 K1AR at TI1J CQWW 1989
370 K1DG at KP2A CQWW 1988
365 K3NA at PJ9JR CQWW 1979

Pages 122 & 123 contain listings like this. Reading them really makes you wonder...

(--Thanks CQ magazine for permission to reprint)



WA4UNZ
Ken Boyd
6733 Cedar Springs Rd.
Charlotte,NC 28212

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